



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, June 27, 2019, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Jennifer Diaz, Nancy Kirby, Lainey Rappaport

Staff Present: Holli Bushnell - Office Assistant

Lainey Rappaport called mtg. to order at 4:35pm

I. Approval of Agenda

Lainey Rappaport approved the agenda, Nancy Kirby seconded. All were in favor.

II. Approval of Minutes from April 23rd Meeting

Rappaport approved the minutes, Rita Church seconded. All were in favor.

III. Welcoming New Commissioner Nancy Kirby/Thanking Departing Commissioner Francis Taginski for His Service to the Commission

Nancy Kirby introduced herself, explaining that she has been a neighbor of Greenmount for around 20 years and she's excited to be part of the commission. Holli Bushnell also took a moment to thank Francis Tag Taginski who served as chair for the last year but was unable to attend his final meeting as a commissioner. She stated that the commission appreciated the work that he has done over the years and thanked him for his time, dedication, and support.

Bushnell also took a moment to remind the commissioners that officers would need to be elected at the next meeting. She informed the commission that a new commissioner, Alexandra Millar, had been appointed by the city council and that Alexandra would be joining the group at the next meeting.

IV. Old Business

A. Lakeview Fence Update/Bids

On behalf of Cindi Wight who was not able to be present at the meeting due to the opening of Waterworks Park, Bushnell reported that the RFP for the fence has gone out for bid but, at that time, no bidders had applied. The plan is to start replacement in two sections, neither of which involve the most damaged area to the south of the office. That area will be replaced after drainage work is completed by Eric Farrell. A piece of the fence that is being replaced will be used to bridge the gap once replacement work begins.

Rappaport would like to have Farrell and members of DPW attend a future meeting once plans for the fence repair and replacement are established. Bushnell confirmed that she would invite Farrell and appropriate DPW staff members once bids were in and a contractor is confirmed.



Church asked what will happen with the entrance gate. Bushnell reports that the curved pieces leading up to the gate and the gate itself are not scheduled to be replaced. If they are replaced the new pieces will be designed in keeping with the original shape of the fence and the original gate pieces will be moved to another location on the grounds as a memorial marker to the original fence.

Church asked if we would be informed when the drainage work would be taking place and when the cemetery gate would be closed. Bushnell will check on that with Wight, DPW, and Farrell.

B. Section 8 Update

There is currently no update on Section 8. Cemetery Superintendent Jeff Shedd intends to make up a plan. When that plan is complete, Bushnell will bring to the commission and, together with BPRW, they will decide if a landscape architect is needed.

Church asked if the original plan for Section 6 still exists and if we would still be able to use it once Section 6 is usable. Bushnell confirmed that the surveyed plan still exists and that we would be able to implement it in the future.

Rappaport asked for confirmation that Section 6 is no longer a priority and if Section 8 would now be the main focus for a new area for burial. Bushnell confirmed that this was the case and stated that she would confirm this with Wight at an upcoming meeting. Church requested that Bushnell speak to Wight about making a plan to use Section 6, Bushnell confirmed that she would do so.

C. Lakeview office building repair update

Office repair is out on RFP. Staff is waiting to hear back to see if there are bidders. Project may need to wait until fall when more contractors are available. Rappaport asked what work needs to be done. Bushnell reports that the work is primarily outside on the siding and side porch roof. Kirby asked what kind of siding is on the building. Bushnell reports that it is clapboard.

D. Grave GPS Project

Bushnell informed the commission that she has been in touch with Pat Schmitz, a project manager for the Innovation & Technology department. The funds for the purchase of the new software would need to come out of the Cemetery/Parks budget, while the funds for the yearly license would come from IT. Currently, it is just a matter of making sure those funds are available and confirming purchase. Bushnell reports that she also has met with members of the admin side of the parks department and has been trained on CivicRec. Her hope is to add the cemetery to CivicRec to help streamline the interment process and clearly track everything that happens at the cemetery. Lot purchases may also be offered through CivicRec in the future pending some investigation.

V. New Business

Church asked if directional signage could be added to the cemetery roads, specifically at the entrances as you head down the hills. She stated that, on a previous visit to the cemetery, she was



forced to back down the hill when someone came driving down the southern hill as she was driving up it. These roads are only able to accommodate one vehicle coming in one direction at the time, and the lack of directional signage could become problematic if someone got hurt or an accident occurred. Bushnell assured her she would contact Wight to see if signage could be procured.

Kirby asked if someone is looking for information on a resident at any of the city cemeteries should contact the Lakeview office via phone and Bushnell confirmed that this would be best.

Kirby also asked if there could be additional signage added to Greenmount to insure that those visiting were clear on the rules. Bushnell confirmed that she would add this to the email she plans to send Wight.

VI. Superintendent and Office Assistant Report

A. Price Change – Requested by Jeff Shedd

Bushnell provided the commissioners with a memo from Superintendent Shedd concerning the possibility of raising prices on lot purchase in the cremation garden. He would like prices to go from \$350 for Burlington residents and \$450 for non-residents up to \$500 and \$700. All commissioners agreed this jump would be too significant at this time. Most also felt that \$500 is too steep for many of Burlington's less affluent residents. They will take the proposal into consideration and discuss further at a future meeting.

Diaz asked if Bushnell could look into pricing from other similarly sized cities all over the country, other cities in Vermont, and perhaps get some information from CEDO on the economics of the city of Burlington to see if a price increase would be appropriate. Bushnell agreed to do so. Diaz next asked when the last price increase was enacted. The last price increase was in the fall of 2017. Diaz suggested that the commission consider a gradual pricing increase on a schedule so that large increases wouldn't be such a shock to the system. The other commissioners agreed that this might be a good option.

Diaz also asked if there is a structure in place to support individuals who are unable to afford burials. Bushnell confirmed that currently there is not an official structure for handling indigent burials. Church asked if we still offered free lots and burials for stillborn babies and infants or if UVM Medical Center had purchase lots for said burials. UVM has not purchased more lots, and while Lakeview does still have lots available for stillborn, infant, and child burial, they are limited. Church would like to examine this further to see if it's something the commission should allocate. The other commissioners agreed to further examine the matter.

At this time the topic of green burial was broached once again. As always, green burial is an exciting possible option. Diaz requested that Bushnell send out copies of previous minutes discussing the commission's examination of green burial.

B. Educational Trip to Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta, GA

On June 13th and 14th Bushnell traveled to Atlanta, GA with Outdoor and Therapeutic Recreations Programmer Nick Marinelli. The two spent 2 days at Oakland Cemetery, a beautiful, city owned, parks department maintained cemetery that opened in the 1850s. Oakland faces similar issues to Lakeview in terms of being a green space in the middle of a



city, being an old cemetery with ties to city history but a need to stay current and be part of the community in which it exists, and a lack of funding.

What Oakland has done over the last 25 years is allow their day to day functions to be taken over by a foundation (Historic Oakland Foundation). From there they have developed a massive volunteer program that allows them to run tours, plant beautiful gardens, and hold both public and private events. Their volunteers help develop the programing and are what keeps their organization running.

Bushnell and Marinelli hope to take what they learned from the foundation staff and volunteers at Oakland and develop similar programing and a volunteer core. Bushnell is optimistic that this could dramatically improve the way that the city cemeteries operate. She will inform the commission of any plans for events.

VII. Parks Director Items

Wight was not in attendance and therefore did not have items to discuss at this time.

VIII. Commissioner Items

A. Friends of Lakeview Notes/Updates

Church informed the commission that the doors to Louisa Howard Chapel are sticking quite severely. She asked that work be done of the doors to help them move better and allow the chapel to be more accessible. She also stated that the Friends of Lakeview will not be holding another event until this fall. That tour will focus on women's suffrage and will likely be smaller than the military tours they have held in the past. The date has yet to be announced.

B. Greenmount Work Day

Kirby shared that the issues with dumping garbage over the bank at Greenmount continues. She expressed her frustration that the space has not been taken care of. Bushnell shared that BPRW occasionally holds work days with staff and volunteers. She will look into the possibility of holding one up at Greenmount. Diaz suggested that we look into working with VYCC for possible assistance cleaning out Greenmount. Kirby also asked for a sign in book at Greenmount for tourists visiting the cemetery. Bushnell will ask Wight if a station with a sign in book could be set up.

C. Dog waste

Church brought up that when she was visiting the cemetery on Father's Day she encountered an individual walking her dog. When the dog defecated and Rita mentioned to the owner that they needed to clean up after their animal, the owner got upset, stating that the city has a maintenance crew to handle those sorts of things. This sparked the long running conversation on dogs in the cemetery, animal waste, the respectful use of public spaces, and the consequences of breaking the rules of the cemetery. It should be noted that dogs are officially banned from all three Burlington City Cemeteries. As police officers are unlikely to come up and issue a ticket to someone walking their dog and refusing to



clean up after it Diaz suggested we look into whether or not that could be considered a zoning violation. As always, the discussion continues...

IX. Public Comments

No public comments were made at this time.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for 7/10 at 4:30pm and will be held at the Lakeview Office. This meeting will be procedural, and the commission will be electing a chair, welcoming new commissioner, Alexandra Millar, and signing the FY19 Commission Report.